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Senator Carter files *HOPE Chest* legislation

ATLANTA – State Senator Joseph Carter (R-Tifton) has introduced legislation on behalf of Governor Sonny Perdue, which aims to improve student achievement across the State of Georgia. Senate Resolution 655, known as the *HOPE Chest* Amendment, was filed yesterday in the State Senate by Sen. Carter as a part of Gov. Perdue's 2006 education plan. Part of a two-fold agenda, the resolution provides for a constitutional amendment that would limit the use of state lottery revenues to costs associated with the HOPE scholarship and Pre-K programs.

"I am hopeful that this legislation will improve education by spending our education dollars in the classroom," stated Sen. Carter. "From 1994 to 2003, over \$1.8 billion in lottery revenue was spent on budget items outside of HOPE and Pre-K. One of the major reasons I ran for office was to help improve Georgia's public education system, and one way to do that is to ensure that lottery money is spent solely on education."

Another bill in the Governor's package, Senate Bill 390, would require that 65 percent of all education dollars be spent directly in the classroom. Sen. Carter is a co-sponsor of this legislation, which would require that local districts receiving state funds to spend at least 65 percent of their total school budget on classroom expenditures as defined by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). School

systems may apply for a waiver from this rule if they demonstrate to the State Board of Education that their use of taxpayer money is leading to higher achievement for their students.

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Sen. Joseph Carter is the Vice Chairman of the Senate Education and Youth Committee. He represents the 13th Senate District which includes Ben Hill, Crisp, Irwin, Lee, Tift, Turner and Worth Counties and a portion of Wilcox County. He can be reached at 404.463.1363 or by email at joseph@josephcarter.com.